

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. HAWLEY. Madam President, last week, I came to this floor on two separate occasions with Senator SANDERS to talk about the need for direct assistance to working families in my State—in the State of Missouri—and all across this country. I said that I was willing to use every tool at my disposal to make sure that this body acted to give direct assistance to working people in need as part of COVID relief. I said then, and I say it again today, that working people should be first in line for COVID relief, not last. They should be the first consideration, not some afterthought.

I am pleased to report that we were told today, as negotiations are ongoing about a COVID relief bill, that direct assistance to working people and working families is in the bill, that working people will be getting assistance.

I want to say once again here on this floor, as that package continues to take shape, how important it is that working families be able to count on some relief and how important it is for this body to prioritize working people over government, over big businesses, over government programs, and to give assistance directly to the people themselves.

Look, people know how to spend their money and what is best for their own families. The quickest way to help people in need is to give them direct assistance and let them make the choices for their own families, for their own kids, not to have to wait in line for some program, not to have to talk to some bureaucrat but to be able to make their own choices direct, with assistance that comes direct to them. That is going to be in this bill, I understand.

I am sure as heck going to continue to fight to see that it is in the bill and that any relief that is passed by the Senate prioritizes working people with direct relief.

Some have questioned whether this is really necessary. Some have said: Well, it is not an emergency, and this bill is only for emergencies, and direct assistance isn't an emergency.

To that I say: Is it not an emergency that working people are having to line up for food—literally, line up for food—in this country, in this day and age, because they don't have enough money to go purchase nutrition for their own children?

Just think about what is happening in my own State.

Let me tell you about Monark Baptist Church in Neosho, MO, down in Southwest Missouri. They had a food distribution program. They have done this for years, by the way, but as COVID intensified this past year, they stood up their efforts. Neighbors came together and donated. They got all the food that they could. They went out there in Neosho, MO—not a huge town.

Monark Baptist Church went out and started distributing food.

Do you know they distributed food to hundreds of families for hours. When they had run out of the food, there were over 50 cars—not individuals, cars. Fifty cars were still in line, as far as the eye could see, having driven miles and miles around from neighboring counties to come for the help.

These are working people. These are not folks who want some handout. These are working people. These are proud people. These are people who don't want government to do stuff for them. They want to be able to get back up on their own feet and provide for themselves.

Government shut down their businesses and took away their jobs this past year and put them in this position of, in some cases, outright desperation.

Let me tell you about a gal from Kansas City, 22 years old. Her first name is Mars. I won't share her last name just for her own privacy. You know, she has talked to me and told me about her plight. She moved to Kansas City earlier this year, right around the time the pandemic started. She got an apartment. She was getting set up and getting going. Then, the pandemic hit. Then, the shutdown hit. Then, she lost her job. Then, she lost her plumbing. The water wouldn't work. She complained to the landlord. They wouldn't do anything. The ceiling collapsed. The landlord wouldn't do anything. Then she didn't have enough money to make rent, and, the other day, she woke up with a 10-day eviction notice out on her front door.

These are people who need help, not because they don't know how to work but because they do know how to work and the government has put them in the position that they are facing today. This pandemic has put them in the position they are facing today. What they want is the ability to get back up on their own two feet and to provide for themselves by the work of their own hands. That is what direct assistance to working families will do.

So to those who say it is not an emergency, I urge you to open your eyes and to look around at the people who are hurting, who are struggling, who are desperate for help.

I have heard that it is said: Well, it is not stimulative. What a word—direct assistance isn't stimulative, as if the American people are knobs and dials to be twisted and turned around to get a desired outcome, as if the economy is something to be micromanaged in Washington, DC.

I am not interested in stimulus. I am interested in helping working people survive. I am not interested in micromanaging this economy. I am interested in getting working people back up on their feet so they can manage their own lives. That is what this is about. That is why the need is so great. That is what we are trying to accomplish.

We have a chance to do this, to get this done, to get accomplished here

something that we can be proud of before Christmas, to send a message to the American people that they matter, to send a message to working people in my State and in every State in this Country that they matter and that we are here fighting for them; that we look forward to the day when they are back at work, ready to work, able to support themselves and their families, and that we are on the path to getting there.

That is the message that we can send. That is the message that we must send. I will not leave this body until it is accomplished.

I promise you this. If I have anything to say about it, we will not be leaving here before Christmas until direct assistance is on the way to the working people of this Nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

TRIBUTE TO TOM UDALL

Mr. REED. Madam President, I want to take some time to thank and commend my colleagues who are departing the Senate. All of these Members have devoted themselves to serving the Nation and serving their States. We are all better off for their service.

Let me begin with my friend and colleague TOM UDALL. TOM inherited a family tradition of fighting for the American West and its citizens. His time in the Senate only added to the Udall legacy.

TOM has been one of our Chamber's leaders on conservation and the environment. He championed the creation of monuments and worked to block the Trump administration's harmful environmental policies. And, this year, he helped secure permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which was pioneered by TOM's father, Stewart Udall.

TOM's commitment to the health of our Nation's environment has always been evident, and I was proud to hand off my role as the Democratic leader of the Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee to TOM in 2015. During his tenure, funding for the Interior appropriations bill grew by 25 percent, and more than 100 anti-environmental riders were blocked. These victories would have been impossible without TOM's ability to connect with his fellow Members and get things done. They are also a testament to TOM's deep knowledge of America's lands and resources.

Of course, TOM's successes go beyond his environmental work. TOM has worked tirelessly to ensure our Nation's Native Americans receive the respect and support they are entitled to. He salvaged and ultimately passed bipartisan legislation updating the Toxic Substances Control Act for the first time since 1976, which was a big victory for public health. I was also pleased to work with TOM to pass legislation in 2016 to help reduce and prevent suicide among adolescents and young adults.

Finally, I am especially grateful for TOM's efforts to increase resources for